
All Railway Men: National Federation Will Embrace Every Branch: Unions to Consolidate

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The American Railway Union was permanently organized yesterday [April 11, 1893] at a meeting held in the parlors of the Hotel Greene, No. 146 East Madison Street [Chicago]. This is the new combination of railway employees, of which a temporary organization was had two months ago. Yesterday's meeting was held in pursuance of a call issued by the Committee on Constitution and Declaration of Purposes. George W. Howard, ex-Chief of the Conductors' order, presided.

But little business was done yesterday, and several more railway men will arrive today to participate in the proceedings, which will continue for three days. The reading of the report of the committee on Constitution was deferred until today. The Board of Directors will be named and the election of officers will take place today. Speaking of the union, Eugene V. Debs of the Firemen's Brotherhood, one of the prime movers, said:

"The union will be formed of all classes of railway employees working on trains, tracks, in shops, offices, anywhere. They will be organized by the branch of work they do. There will be a central body composed of one delegate from each of those branches, and then there will be a President, Secretary, and Treasurer. That's the plan. There will be no benevolent features. It is formed for mutual protection and the promotion of the interests of the working railroad men. Its home will be in Chicago.

"We will open permanent headquarters here as soon as we adjourn and send out from here our organizers over all railway lines.

"We will hold a mass meeting at an early day in Chicago to talk to railway men and the public and state our purposes.

“This fall we will hold a grand convention in Chicago, which will form the basis from which will date hereafter our quadrennial conventions, for we are building to endure.”

Those at yesterday’s session were Eugene V. Debs, Terre Haute; L.W. Rogers, Oshkosh [WI], S. Keliher, Minneapolis; W.S. Missemer, St. Joseph, Mo.; W.H. Sebring, Memphis; James A. Clark, Englewood [CO]; George W. Howard, Chicago; Henry Walton, Philadelphia; F.W. Arnold, Chicago. These men are widely known as grand officers, ex-grand officers, or unofficial leaders among railway employees. The Railway Age and other railway journals, supposed to represent the corporate side of the issues arising in the railway world, called attention to this meeting and its objects as one of the most important moves recently made toward a general close federation or unification of all the now scattered, discordant, and often belligerent brotherhoods and orders of railway employees.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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